

## A Different Path: Howling at the Moon

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Category: Dragon Age

Genre: Fantasy, Romance

Language: English

Characters: Lavellan, Solas

Pairings: Solas/Lavellan

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2016-04-14 06:27:21

Updated: 2016-04-14 06:27:21

Packaged: 2016-04-27 17:16:46

Rating: M

Chapters: 1

Words: 5,297

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: Once upon a time, a mage rose from the Sacred Ashes and saved the world. But with a small twist in time, things could have gone another way entirely... The world stands on the precipice of change as the boundaries of what is and isn't real begin to break down. A young Dalish mage stands at the heart of a maelstrom.

### A Different Path: Howling at the Moon

She came around the corner to find a man in templar armor. He looked her over. "What are you doing down here, knife-ear?"

"I think I took a wrong turn." Quiyala started to skirt around him, and he moved to block her path. Maybe she shouldn't have ditched Vathran and Sulana.

"And here I thought rabbits had some direction sense." His critical gaze became a leer. "Fetch me some of that wine, and I'll give you the grand tour."

"I think I'll..."

He took a step towards her. "I wasn't asking." He caught her upper arm before reaching to run a hand down her cheek.

Quiyala was about to reach for her magic when a massive hand came down on the templar's shoulder. A deep voice that managed to be both amused and threatening at the same time boomed through the hall.

"There you are, sis. Been looking everywhere for you."

She looked up to see one of the massive oxmen mercenaries. He was smiling, face friendly. "Sister?" The templar started to sneer.

The big man tightened his grip, causing the templar to groan and start to stagger. "What, you don't see the family resemblance?" The

tone remained light and playful. The big man rolled his eyes, then glanced at Quiyala. "Templars."

It was a way out of the bad situation, and she immediately leaped for it. A man who'd come to the rescue of an elven woman couldn't be that bad. "I got turned around at that last staircase. There are entirely too many staircases."

"And low doors." He casually shoved the templar out of the way, then offered his arm to her. "Come on, let's head back up."

She accepted the arm and let him lead her out of the hall. As soon as they were out of earshot, she glanced up at him. "Sister?"

"Cousin didn't sound quite threatening enough." He shrugged, and grinned down at her.

"Appreciate the help." Quiyala laughed softly

"You good from here?" He nodded at the stairs.

"Should be."

"You get caught spying again, tell them you're with Valo-kas."

"Who says I was spying?"

He winked before walking off. She laughed, and went back to her spying.

#

"There you are." Vathran strode towards her. "Fen'harel ma ghilana, we've been looking everywhere for you. What were you doing in there?"

It took an act of will not to roll her eyes. "I was trying to learn what is going on." She jerked her arm out of his hand. "Like the Keeper asked."

He lowered his voice to a hiss. "And what if a templar caught you? Took you for an apostate?"

"Vathran, right now, all mages are apostates. This is probably the safest I've ever been." She waved one hand. If she told him the truth, he'd never let her out of his sight again. "A third of the people here are mages. The templars aren't going to start a fight over one." Quiyala considered telling him about the qunari mercenary, and decided against it. Vathran was jumpy enough as it was, he'd probably convince himself the qunari had tried to drag her to the gun.

"The Keeper sent Sulana and I to protect you." He glared.

"She sent Sulana to protect us. She sent you and I to get information. Which I can't do with you insisting I stay at camp."

"She's got a point." Sulana called over.

"Don't you start too." Vathran tossed a glare over his shoulder. He pointed a finger at Quiyala's face. "Don't wander off without us again."

#

"You looked hungry." She smiled at the mercenary.

He returned the smile. "I'm always hungry." He accepted the roll of flatbread she handed him, then offered her his other hand.

"Kathan."

She accepted the handshake. "Quiyala." She took a deep breath. "Look, I'd like to take a look at the camp down in the valley, but..."

"You think it's a bit dangerous to go by yourself." He nodded, saying the words around a mouthful of food. "Normally, I charge a bit more than baked goods for escort service." He glanced down at the roll. "But this is really damn good."

Quiyala laughed. "Get me there and back, you can have the rest of the batch."

He swallowed the last bite. "Happens I'm off duty at the moment. Now work?"

"Now definitely works."

#

"I don't suppose you've heard anything interesting?" She glanced up at the young qunari.

He shook his head. "As near as I can tell, they haven't finished talking about what they want to talk about." He glanced at her out of the corner of his eye. "You might have better luck talking to the other mages."

She stumbled slightly. "How'd you know I was a mage?"

"Didn't." He grinned. "Til right now."

Quiyala sighed. "I'm not cut out to be a spy."

"Ya ain't here alone, are you?" He raised an eyebrow.

"No. Two of my clan are here with me." They talked a while longer as they walked, comparing their travels through the Free Marches. She went quiet as they came within earshot of the camp, and then shrugged. "The events here will affect all of Thedas."

"Things are gonna change, that's for sure." Kathan shrugged. "Not sure yet which way. Some of the mages have a desperate look to them. Makes me nervous."

"Don't worry." Quiyala patted his arm. "If the spells start flying, I'll protect you." She smiled when he laughed. There were a few looks in her direction as they walked, but those who seemed inclined to confront her apparently reconsidered the option after taking a second look at her companion. She nodded towards part of the camp. "What do

you make of those?"

"Not templars. At least, not most of them. A few are, but the other templars don't seem to be happy with those few." He nodded. "A third party is at play." He glanced down at her, and shrugged. "My band got hired on by an agent of the Divine. These guys seem to be answering to same group."

"Will you tell me about this agent?" She looked up at him as they headed back out of the camp.

"One of the hands of the Divine. She hired us through an intermediary, so I've never met her. Not sure I'm even supposed to know she's the one that hired us. All I know is our orders are to bust anyone making trouble, templar, mage, or other."

"Neutral enforcement." She nodded slowly. "So the Divine is making an effort to not overtly take sides." She asked a few more questions on their way back up to the temple, then gestured for him to follow her so she could make good on her promised payment. "If you don't mind, you're not like what I've heard about qunari."

"That's because I'm vashoth. No gun here." He shrugged, and tucked the rolls carefully into his satchel.

"What's a vashoth?" She raised an eyebrow.

"Well..." He shrugged. "It's a bad analogy, but if the Dalish were qunari, I'd be one of those elves living in the city."

Quiyala nodded. Then she impulsively hugged him. "Take care of yourself, Kathan."

"You too, Chipmunk."

She raised an eyebrow. "Chipmunk?"

He winked before taking his leave. She just shook her head and went to find Vathran. Hopefully, he didn't ask her what happened to their dinner.

#

Quiyala handed the tea to Sulana before placing her glowing hands on the other woman's head. She brushed red hair out of Sulana's face. "Did you at least learn anything interesting while drinking half the liquor in the tavern?"

"Maybe." Sulana downed the entire cup in one long gulp. "The Carta is leaning towards the templars. More profit in it for them." She rubbed the back of her neck. "Though a few of them support the notion of continuing the conflict as long as possible."

She grimaced. "How influential are they?"

"More than they should be, less than they want to be." Sulana let her refill the tea. "Ugh, remind me not to drink anything Rivaini again."

Quiyala rose, and then glanced down at her friend. "You're going to

take the offer, aren't you?"

Sulana stared down at the tea before finishing it off. "Yeah."

"I'll miss you." She smiled, and took the cup to refill it again.

"Same." She sighed. "Look, I know..." She shook her head and accepted the refilled cup. "You know the Keeper has this hope that by sending you and Vathran off together..."

Quiyala grimaced. "I would rather marry the Dread Wolf."

"That's my girl." Sulana grinned.

#

"Chipmunk."

She seated herself on the ledge just above the gunari. "Knucklehead." Quiyala handed him down one of the meat pies. "Anything new?"

"Yeah, maybe." He took a bite. "Somebody important is on their way up the mountain."

"How important?"

"Well, that's the thing. Ain't sure. Heard a bunch of names mentioned. But it's got britches twisted on both sides." He glanced up at her. "The templars will talk to me, but other than you the mages won't."

"I'll see if I can find one that knows something. Meet me here for dinner?"

"Like I'd miss that." Kathan frowned. "That uh..." He hesitated. "Dalish guy causing problems for you?"

Quiyala laughed. "If he tried, Sulana'd break him in half. She's a lot tougher than she looks." She shook her head. "Vathran thinks he needs to protect me."

"Pfft. That's what you feed me for." Kathan poked her leg. "Hey, look." He shrugged. "When this mess is over, if you don't feel like heading back into the woods, you can always try the merc life for a while."

"Funny. I was going to say if you didn't feel like heading back into the merc life, you could try the woods for a while." She pinched the top of his ear. "You've got the ears for it." Quiyala smiled before patting the top of his head affectionately. "Well, we are both heading back to the Free Marches either way, I suppose."

He grinned. "I got to get back to another day of protecting folks from themselves."

"I've got to go find a mage who knows something." She stood. "You'd think that would be easy around here."

#

It took her an hour to find one. The red-haired human mage, Ruya, was nice enough, and an amazing font of information on everything going on. She seemed to know everyone, and the presence of the templar accompanying her meant the rest of the templars left them alone. The day was starting to drag on, and despite her earlier enjoyment of learning the game, she was starting to grow bored with playing chess even with the pleasant company.

Ruya won the match and offered another game. Quiyala shook her head. "I think I'll stretch my legs."

#

Ruya started to accompany her. She was trying to think of some polite way to lose the woman and find Knucklehead to compare notes when she heard something and broke off the conversation. "Did you hear something?"

"There it is again." Ruya tilted her head. "Is that someone shouting?"

"Upstairs or down?"

"I'll go up, you go down." Ruya began moving.

Quiyala rushed down the stairs. She heard a shout again, and headed down the hall. From the other direction she saw Kathan. He stopped at the intersection. "Chipmunk."

"Knucklehead." She frowned as she listened. "Did you hear..."

There was another shout. They nodded to each other before splitting up and heading in opposite directions.

#

The unconscious woman's face bore the marks of June. Unfortunately, that told him little. He delved the mark again, but could still find no means of removal. Not without the orb that had brought it into being. Even then, it was unlikely he could remove it without killing her. Before the world could be fixed, it must first be saved. And without the orb, this elven girl was the only hope he had.

She twitched and moved in response to his spell, crying out as she did every time he probed the magic, no matter how gently. He switched to a healing spell, and she calmed once more. He could feel her magic, instinctively responding to his own. Stronger than he'd expected from her kind. It was a pity she was unlikely to survive. She'd walked within the Fade.

"Solas?"

He turned at the sound of Cassandra's voice. "Yes, Seeker?"

"Have you found anything?" She entered the hut, arms folded. Her face was not entirely hostile.

"That she breathes still is surprising."

Cassandra's eyes narrowed. "You claimed you could aid us. If you do not produce results soon, I will be forced to assume you have some other agenda. And take steps."

Solas inclined his head. Steps, no doubt, would include either a cage or a blade. Neither suited him. There was a time he would not have responded well to the threat, but he could see from the woman's eyes that the words were driven more by fear than malice. And he did not yet believe he was in danger from her. "I would like to take what little I have learned, and make another attempt at closing a rift."

"I will arrange to have some soldiers take you." She turned, and stalked off.

"Grey..." The prisoner was murmuring in her sleep again. "The grey..."

He bent, brushing hair away from her face in a soothing gesture. She calmed, and went still again. He sighed, picked up his staff, and headed to meet the soldiers. One more attempt, and then he'd have to find another way.

#

She opened her eyes and stared up at the unfamiliar ceiling. No sooner did she start to stir than the man bending over her scrambled backwards in panic. A heartbeat later, armed men had her by the arms and were dragging her towards the Chantry. Had two of them not worn templar armor, she might have tried calling upon her magic.

Her hands were secured by a manacle, and she was left kneeling on the cold stone floor. Four men kept their swords pointed at her. Quiyala made herself breath, slowing her racing heart. Panic was not the proper response to whatever was happening.

The palm of her left hand tingled, and she looked down to find it glowing with a strange green energy. It sparked, sending pain shooting up her arm. She gasped, and saw the men with swords shift slightly in response.

A door opened, and two women entered. The soldiers immediately stepped back, putting their swords away. The taller of the two women had dark hair, and wore armor emblazoned with the crest of the Seekers. She moved to stand behind Quiyala, and leaned down until her mouth was inches from Quiyala's ear. "Tell me why we shouldn't kill you now." She straightened, and started to pace a circle around Quiyala. "The Conclave is destroyed. Everyone who attended is dead." She pointed. "Except for you."

The bottom dropped out of Quiyala's stomach. "What do you mean everyone's dead?"

Instead of replying, the woman grabbed Quiyala's wrist and lifted the glowing hand. "Explain this." She flung the hand back down.

"I can't." She struggled to make sense of what was happening.

"What do you mean you can't?"

"I don't know what that is, or how it got there." She tried to focus her memory. She'd been playing chess?

The woman grabbed her by the front of her tunic. "You're lying."

"We need her, Cassandra." The second woman intervened, catching the first woman's wrist and moving her back.

Chess and then... She swallowed. Kathan in the hallway. "I can't believe it. All those people..." Her friend. "Dead?"

The red haired woman turned to face her. "Do you remember what happened? How this began?"

She'd gone down the hall and... "I remember running. Things were chasing me, and then..." Memories slipped away as she reached for them. The red haired... No, she'd parted ways from the mage earlier. Someone else. "A woman?"

"A woman?"

"She reached out to me, but then..." Had their hands touched? She couldn't bring the image into focus.

"Go to the forward camp, Leliana. I will take her to the rift."

Leliana. And Cassandra. The Hands of the Divine. Quiyala swallowed. How much trouble was she in? Cassandra removed the manacles, but bound her wrists. Not tightly. Given a few minutes alone, she could probably get the ropes off without too much trouble. Something told her the opportunity was not going to arise. "What did happen?"

"It will be easier to show you."

#

The daylight blinded her, and as her eyes adjusted she realized just how very wrong the sky appeared. A vortex of green energy swirled in the sky, and rocks hung in the air just below the pulsing clouds. It took her a moment to realize Cassandra was talking. "We call it 'th Breach.' It's a massive rift into the world of demons that grows larger with each passing hour." Cassandra turned towards her. "It's not the only such rift. Just the largest. All were caused by the explosion at the Conclave."

Someone had torn the Veil on a truly unfathomable scale. It should be impossible. "An explosion can do that?"

"This one did." Cassandra walked back towards her. "Unless we act, the Breach may grow until it swallows the world."

Above them, the Breach pulsed. A heartbeat later so did the mark on her hand. The shooting pain drove her to her knees, and she cried out.

Cassandra knelt next to her. "Each time the Breach expands, your mark spreads..." She pointed at the hand. "And it is killing you. It may be the key to stopping this, but there isn't much time."



Quiyala looked down at her hand. "You say it may be the key..." She looked back up at Cassandra. "To doing what?"

"Closing the Breach. Whether that's possible is something we shall discover shortly. It is our only chance, however. And yours."

The threat was unnecessary. A Keeper was a teacher and a guide. But first and foremost, a Keeper's duty was to protect the clan. Quiyala got to her feet. "Then we should hurry."

#

Cassandra led the prisoner past the staring eyes of the hostile camp. She only hoped she would not have to draw her sword in the prisoner's defense. The girl was cooperating, but that could change if the situation grew violent. "They have decided your guilt. They need it. The people of Haven mourn our Most Holy, Divine Justinia, head of the Chantry. The Conclave was hers."

The prisoner did not respond. But then, Cassandra hadn't expected her to. At this point, she wasn't sure which of them her words were intended to comfort. "It was a chance for peace between mages and templars. She brought their leaders together. Now, they are dead. We lash out, like the sky. But we must think beyond ourselves. As she did. Until the Breach is sealed."

She stopped, and turned to face the prisoner. From the back of her belt, she drew a knife. "There will be a trial. I can promise no more." With a quick motion, she cut the prisoner's hands free. "Come. It is not far."

"Where are you taking me?" The prisoner followed her as she headed across the bridge.

"Your mark must be tested on something smaller than the Breach." Cassandra continued in a hurried walk. She only hoped Solas and the soldiers were still there. "Open the gate. We are heading into the valley."

#

The bridge in front of them exploded. Quiyala tried to move backwards to safety, but the stone beneath her feet collapsed. She and the Seeker both fell to the icy river below. She was halfway back to her feet when the demon appeared. "Stay behind me." Cassandra drew her blade as she rushed forward to meet the demon.

Quiyala started to call up a barrier to aid when another demon materialized before her. She sent a blast of lightning, and then caught sight of a staff that had fallen from the bridge above. She grabbed it and used it to focus the next blast to far more lethal effect.

No sooner had she finished off her demon than Cassandra was kicking her sword free of the other. "It's over." She started walking back towards the Seeker.

Cassandra turned and pointed the sword at her. "Drop your weapon. Now."

It was all she could do not to roll her eyes. "Do you really think I need a staff to be dangerous?"

"Is that supposed to reassure me?" Cassandra narrowed her eyes.

"I haven't used my magic on you yet."

Several heartbeats passed. And then Cassandra sighed. "You're right." She sheathed her sword. "You don't need a staff, but you should have one. I cannot protect you." She walked a few paces before turning back towards her. "I should remember you agreed to come willingly."

#

He started to draw from the Fade, and a lightning struck the demon. Solas switched the direction of his attack and sent the blast of ice at the demon pressing one of the soldiers Cassandra had sent to guard him. A glance over his shoulder revealed Cassandra herself charging into the fray, accompanied by... the prisoner?

The young Dalish woman used her spells to devastating affect. The demons were gone within moments. Solas glanced at the rift, and then at the prisoner. He shook his head and then stepped towards her, catching her wrist. There was no time to explain. He could feel spirits drawing near the rift once more. "Quickly, before more come through."

She let him pull her to the rift. He sent his will through the mark, and felt her catch it, reacting purely on instinct. The power flowed from her, interacting with the rift. Solas felt her twist the power, just slightly, and the rift collapsed. He tried to hide his surprise as he released her hand.

"What did you do?" She turned towards him, raising an eyebrow.

"I did nothing." He inclined his head towards her. "The credit is yours." Relief flooded him as he glanced at where the rift had been before turning his eyes back to her. It had worked.

#

Quiyala looked down at her hand. "At least this is good for something." It itched oddly, tingling with the magic that had flowed through it. Some of it had come from him, at first, before she'd picked up on what was happening.

"Whatever magic opened the Breach in the sky also placed that mark upon your hand." His magic. "I theorized the mark might be able to close the rifts that have opened in the Breach's wake..." He gestured at where the rift had been. "And it seems I was correct."

Cassandra walked over from where she had been sending the surviving soldiers on their way. "Meaning it could also close the Breach itself."

"Possibly." The other elven mage nodded to her. "It seems you hold the key to our salvation."

She started to ask a question, but was interrupted by the voice of

the dwarf. "Good to know. Here I thought we'd be ass-deep in demons forever." He nodded to her cheerfully. "Varric Tethras: rogue, storyteller, and occasionally unwelcome tagalong." He winked at Cassandra, who made a growling noise.

As soon as she found Sulana, she'd have to let the woman know the author of that book she liked so much was wandering about. "That's..." She shrugged. "A nice crossbow you have there."

"Ah, isn't she? Bianca and I have been through a lot together."

"You named your crossbow Bianca?" Perhaps she wasn't the only one that had recently been hit in the head.

"Of course. And she'll be great company in the valley."

"Absolutely not." Cassandra stepped forward and began arguing with the dwarf.

The other elf shook his head, and turned towards her once more. "My name is Solas, if there are to be introductions. I am pleased to see you still live."

"He means, 'I kept that mark from killing you while you slept'." Varric called over, having apparently won the argument.

"You seem to know a great deal about it all." Quiyala gave him an appraising look. He was tall, for an elf. A good three inches taller than Vathran. It was hard to put an age to him. Despite his baldness, he didn't seem to be elderly.

"Like you, Solas is an apostate."

"Technically all mages are now apostates, Cassandra." Solas shrugged. "My travels have allowed me to learn much of the Fade, far beyond the experience of any Circle mage. I came to offer whatever help I can give with the Breach. If it is not closed, we are all doomed, regardless of origin."

"And when this is over?" She raised an eyebrow. They were both, after all, surrounded by Chantry forces. A seeker was less than ten feet from them.

"One hopes those in power will remember who helped and who did not." He turned towards the Seeker. "Cassandra, you should know: the magic involved here is unlike any I have seen. Your prisoner is a mage, but I find it difficult to imagine any mage having such power."

"Understood." Cassandra nodded. She pointed. "We must get to the forward camp quickly."

"Well, Bianca's excited." Varric shrugged.

#

"Hurry. Use the mark." He thought for a moment that he would have to guide her through the process again, but she simply lifted her hand and willed the magic through. A fast study. Solas followed Cassandra and the prisoner through the gate to the bridge.

Chancellor Roderick was proving himself to be a rather annoying obstruction. Fortunately, Cassandra was not inclined to humor him. The prisoner spoke up. "This discussion can wait until after we have dealt with the Breach." She pointed up at the hole in the sky. "It is a somewhat more pressing issue."

"You brought this on us in the first place." Roderick shook his head. "Call a retreat, Seeker. Our position here is hopeless."

"We can stop this before it's too late." Cassandra squared her shoulders. She and Leliana began ignoring Roderick as they discussed how to get to the temple. Cassandra turned to the prisoner. "How do you think we should proceed?"

"You're asking me?" The prisoner gave her a disbelieving look.

"You have the mark." Solas nodded to her.

"And you are the one we must keep alive." Cassandra waved a hand. "Since we cannot agree on our own..."

The prisoner slowly nodded. "Then we move with the soldiers. I doubt I'll survive long enough for a trial." She looked up at Cassandra. "Time is of the essence."

#

She called her magic to her as they entered, sending barrage of energy into a demon attacking one of the soldiers. Cassandra took the lead, charging in. "Be wary, another fade rift." Solas gestured.

Quiyala headed towards the rift, using her magic to backup the warriors facing the demons. She sent lightning into a manifesting shade, then smacked another with her staff. As soon as the last demon had fallen, she let the energy flow through her again, sealing the rift.

"Sealed, as before." Solas gave her an approving nod. "You are becoming quite proficient at this."

"Let's hope it works on the big one." Varric shrugged.

One of the soldiers walked towards them. His armor was lined in fur, and the way the others acted indicated he was someone of authority. "Lady Cassandra, you managed to close the rift?" He sheathed his sword. "Well done."

"Do not congratulate me, Commander." Cassandra gestured at her. "This is the prisoner's doing."

"Is it?" He looked her over. "I hope they're right about you. We've lost a lot of people getting you here."

She let healing energy flow into one of the nearby soldiers, stopping him from bleeding out from a wound he'd taken. "I will do my best. Hopefully, that will be enough."

"That's all we can ask." He turned back to Cassandra and pointed.

"The way to the temple should be clear. Leliana will try to meet you there."

"Then we'd best move quickly." Cassandra looked around the field. "Give us time, Commander."

"Maker watch over you." He nodded. "For all our sakes."

For a moment, she wished she dared take the time to do more healing. The commander had to half-carry one of the injured men from the field, and she could see more wounded. Some would die, if they didn't reach a healer soon. She sighed, and followed Cassandra.

#

An involuntary shiver ran through her at the sight of the temple. The last thing she could remember is running into her Knucklehead in the corridor. If she was the only survivor... She shook her head. Leliana caught up with them as they entered the ruins. Cassandra turned towards her. "This is your chance to end this. Are you ready?"

The odds of her surviving this were slim. If it worked at all, it would be little short of a miracle. Quiyala nodded. "I am." She looked up at the Breach. "I'm just not sure how to reach."

"No." Solas drew her attention to a rift down in the remains of the temple. "This rift was the first, and it is the key. Seal it, and perhaps we seal the Breach."

She nodded. Cassandra started heading in. "Then let's find a way in, and be careful."

#

From the air came a voice. Male, and chilling, with an odd quality that she couldn't decide was a result of its nature or its presentation. "Now is the hour of our victory. Bring forth the sacrifice." Echoes of the Fade, and some red lyrium that seemed to disturb Varric.

The voice came again, and then a woman, calling for help. Cassandra shook her head at the sound. "That is Divine Justinia's voice."

They continued down. Justinia's voice called again, and then Quiyala started. Her own voice answered. "What's going on here?"

Cassandra's eyes widened as she turned towards Quiyala. "That was your voice. Most holy called out to you. But..."

Images appeared in the air above them, playing out a scene. Divine Justinia, held prisoner by a tall man. Herself opening the door, interrupting whatever had been occurring. The Divine had told her to run and get help. And the tall man had ordered someone to kill her.

"You were there. Who attacked? And the Divine, is she...?" Cassandra walked towards her. "Was this vision true? What are we seeing?"

"I don't remember." Quiyala shook her head.

Solas spoke up. "Echoes of what happened here. The Fade bleeds into this place." He drew their attention back to the rift. "This rift is not sealed, but it is closed, albeit temporarily. I believe that with the mark, the rift can be opened, and then sealed properly and safely. However, opening the rift will likely attract attention from the other side."

"That means demons." Cassandra readied her shield. "Stand ready." She nodded to Quiyala.

Quiyala waited until the soldiers had taken their positions, and then raised her hand to the rift.

#

She sent a blast of magic at the pride demon, and then turned back to the rift, letting energy flow through her to disrupt the rift. The energy backlashed into the pride demon, staggering it. Quiyala twirled her staff and sent more another wave of spells at the demon.

It fell under their combined assault. "Do it," Cassandra yelled.

Quiyala turned towards the rift and summoned the energy once more. It flowed from her, twisting and distorting the rift. She felt herself growing dizzy, and held the force anyway. Finally, the rift collapsed. A heartbeat later, so did she.

End  
file.